Chengannur. In consequence, litigants of the taluk had to travel distances varying from 12 miles to 42 miles in order to reach either of the two courts. The minimum distance between a court and any *pakuthi* was 12 miles. About 60 years ago, Pattanamtitta had a Munsiff's Court, but it was transferred to Krishnapuram. There were forty joint stock companies, four hundred registered *chitties*, one hundred co-operative societies and various trading concerns working in the taluk. In 1105 the number of cases of the Pattanamtitta taluk filed in the Adur Munsiff's court was 439 and of those in the Chengannur Muinsiff's court was 481. The total average of the number of cases from the taluk for the last three years was 850. From the Mallapuzhacherri *pakuthi* alone, 240 cases were annually filed in the Chengannur Munsiff's court.

The subject had been represented in successive sessions of the Assembly; but nothing was done by Government for redressing the grievance of the people of the taluk. The member therefore suggested that the question should forthwith be taken up by the Law's Delays Commissioner and by Government.

DEWAN'S REPLY : നിങ്ങാം മഹാരാജാവുതിരുമനസ്സിലേനേക്കും മഹാറാണിറീജൻറുതിരുമനസ്സിലേനേക്കും രാജഭക്തിപ്രദർശ്ശിപ്പിച്ചതു സന്തോഷപൂവ്വം തിരുമനസ്സറിയിക്കാം.

നിങ്ങളുടെ നിവേദനത്തിനു വിഷയമായിരിക്കുന്ന സംഗതി, നിങ്ങാം ഒടുവിൽ പറഞ്ഞതുപോലെ, ഇപ്പോാം ജോലിചെയ്യുവരുന്ന ലാ സഡിലേസ് കമ്മിഷണരുടെ ആലോചനയ്ക്കു വിഷയമാക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. നിങ്ങളുടെ നിവേദനത്തിൽ പറയുന്ന ഭാഗങ്ങളെല്ലാം അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു അയച്ചുകൊടുക്കാം.

[I shall gladly convey to His Highness the Maha Raja and to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent your expressions of loyalty. Your representation will be referred to the Law's Delays Commissioner who will do the needful.]

### 25. Legislation for the prevention of tea thefts.

MR. J. H. CANTLAY (*Central Travancore Planters' Association*) drew attention to the urgent need of a Regulation for the prevention of tea thefts, a subject which had been brought up at the Assembly in the previous year. There had been several cases of thefts of tea from factories in the Vandiperiyar district in the year previous and, in some cases, the thieves were caught and dealt with by the officers concerned. The stolen tea found its way to professional receivers, who were usually known to the Police, and they found a ready market for it. The receivers were the root of the evil and the people to legislate against; they continued to prosper on stolen teas with impunity, while those whom they employed became a charge on Government, finding accommodation in the various prisons belonging to the State.

Rubber was provided with a Regulation under which all dealers in the commodity should be licensed. In Ceylon, there were Acts for both rubber and tea, under which the onus of proof in the case of theft

of either product, lay with the person found in possession of the commodity. With regard to tea in Travancore, the onus of proof lay on the Superintendent of the estate from which the tea was stolen, which was quite impracticable, as stolen tea was so easily mixed with other teas. If all dealers in tea were licensed, a further source of revenue would be opened to the Government, and the onus of proof of possession would then lie with the dealer.

There had been long correspondence with the Government on the above subject, but it led to nothing. Tea crops increased year by year in all tea-producing districts of the State and the need for legislation became more and more urgent. The member therefore suggested the introduction of a Bill to deal with that important matter and to safeguard an industry which provided so large a proportion of the State revenue.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Cantlay, the subject on which you have spoken was placed before the Government, last year. The Government have been getting the opinion of their legal advisers and other officers. The general opinion seems to be that it is inexpedient to have legislation on the same lines as the Rubber Thefts Prevention Regulation. One important difference between rubber and tea is worthy of note in this connection. While rubber as such is not consumed in this State, tea is an article of consumption here. If a man is found dealing in rubber, 100 to 1, he may be taken to be a thief, but not so a man who is dealing with the other article. It seems to me that there is thus a great difference between rubber and tea. Government cannot in the present circumstances therefore promise to undertake legislation in this matter. But if your Association thinks that it is a matter which ought to be legislated upon, then I would suggest that a private Bill be introduced by your representative in the Legislative Council when all parties will consider the question. But as at present circumstanced, Government are not advised to start legislation on this subject. I shall be glad to consider any other method of preventing thefts that you can suggest.

**26. Certain suggestions for improving the condition of agriculturists especially of Nanjinad.**

MR. S. AZHAKIANAYAKAM PILLAI (*Agastisvaram taluk*) said that the most serious drawback of the agriculturists was the high price of manure and green manure leaves. He suggested the following remedial measures:—

(i) Prohibitory export duties should be levied on *punnac*, bones and fish manures, which were exported in large quantities from the State.

(ii) The ryots had to obtain passes from the forest authorities for taking green manure from forests. The necessity to obtain the passes should be dispensed with.

(iii) The ryots should be allowed to plant manure trees on tank-beds and river bunds.